

Kildwick school's Stepney exchange visits

In the years prior to the start of WW1 Kildwick school was involved in something which is fairly common-place these days but which might, at the time, have been regarded as a forward-thinking if not revolutionary educational experiment: it was twinned with an inner-city school in Stepney, East London, and a number of exchange visits took place.

An appendix describes how, for one Farnhill girl, these exchange trips led to a life-long friendship.

How it started – 1911

We don't really know how the relationship between the school in Stepney and Kildwick school was established.

On May 10th 1911 Thomas Appleby, the then headmaster of Kildwick school, made the following entry in the school log book:

The school has become affiliated with the Schools Mutual Aid and Flower Society. The children have sent a parcel of nature specimens to St. Thomas' School Stepney and in return have received some pretty specimens of needlework, picture postcards, etc.

This is the first mention of either the Schools Mutual Aid Society or the Stepney school: St. Thomas's Church of England school – attached to St. Thomas's church, Arbour Square, Stepney.

In early July, Appleby was able to describe a further development in the relationship between the two schools:

The children have received some most interesting letters from St. Thomas School, Stepney, this week, describing the Children's Festival at Crystal Palace on June 30th. Specimens of the muslin for decorating the children's hats and a specimen of the chocolate box supplied, were enclosed.

After the summer holidays the pupils of Kildwick School responded:

The children sent a box of Nature Study specimens to St. Thomas School, Stepney, today. Letters, descriptive of our village in Autumn, were also sent.

Finally, before the end of the year:

The children received a very interesting batch of letters, magazines, etc. from the children of St. Thomas' School Stepney.

Kildwick school's first visit St. Thomas's Stepney – 1912

There is no mention of any exchange of materials between the two schools for the first part of the year but, on June 20th, Thomas Appleby notes in the school log.

Thirteen present scholars and seven old boys of this school, under the charge of the Head Teacher and four other adults visited London today... The expenses were defrayed largely by the children, assisted by a fund collected by the Head Teacher. The object of the visit was to enlarge the outlook of the children.

The visit was reported in the Keighley News of June 29th, which gave details of the whirlwind trip.

On Saturday last [June 22nd] seventeen scholars of the Kildwick Church of England School visited London in charge of the headmaster (Mr. Thomas Appleby), and accompanied by a small party of adults. The party left Kildwick shortly after 11 o'clock on Friday night, being accompanied by a number of parents to the station. London was reached about half-past six on Saturday morning, and after breakfast, served immediately on arrival, a full day's sight-seeing was commenced.

Regent's Park was first visited, and afterwards some time was spent in the Zoological Gardens. From the gardens a motor-bus was taken along Oxford Street to Trafalgar Square and the National Gallery, and afterwards to St. Paul's Cathedral. In the afternoon the party went through the Tower of London and then journeyed to St. Thomas's School, Stepney.

Here a pleasant reunion was afforded by the Kildwick scholars meeting the children with whom they had been in correspondence for some time. Thanks were returned on behalf of the London children for the nature-study specimens they had received from their country friends, whilst compliments were returned for the letters descriptive of London life and post-cards sent to Kildwick. The visitors were entertained to tea by the scholars.

Later the round of sight-seeing was continued, the day's proceedings being brought to a close by a visit to Madame Tussaud's Waxworks. London was left just before midnight and Kildwick reached early on Sunday morning. The day was gloriously fine and the children received in a most pleasant manner valuable lessons in history and geography which will never be forgotten.

This must have been quite a remarkable event for the party. An extensive tour of the sights of London and a visit to the East-end, all completed in just 30 hours.

Note: Despite the use of the word "reunion" the overall tenor of the article suggests that this is the first face-to-face meeting between the two sets of school children. Certainly, we have not been able to find any evidence of any earlier trip.

The event must have excited the children as on July 23rd Mr. Appleby cancelled the usual arithmetic lesson, in order that the children could read letters received from St. Thomas's School and talk about them.

We know the name of one of the Kildwick school-children who went on this trip and the name of one of the Stepney hosts.



This photograph was sent, as a postcard, from the then nine year-old Gladys Lloyd of Exmouth Street, Stepney, to Tom Rogers at 23 Newby Road, Farnhill. It is dated 9th December 1912, six-months after the visit. The message, on the reverse, reads:

Dear Tommy,

This is not a very good photo of me, but I thought you would like one. On Saturday I won a certificate for reciting, at the Red Coat Hall.

Kind regards to all who came to London. GL. Gladys Lloyd

Note: Red Coat Hall is likely to be a reference to Sir John Cass's Foundation and Red Coat Church of England School, Stepney. Still in existence, it is less than half-a-mile from Exmouth Street and about the same distance from the site of St. Thomas's in Arbour Square.

St. Thomas's school's visit to Kildwick - 1913

In 1913, it was the turn of a group from the Stepney school to visit Kildwick.

It seems the cost of the rail fare, and whether or not the Stepney children could afford it, may have been an issue and, on May 3rd, the children of Kildwick school helped out by putting on a fund-raising pageant.

KILDWICK.


By kind permission of Messrs. W. A., J. J., & L. BRIGG,
an

Outdoor Entertainment

Will be given in a FIELD NEAR KILDWICK HALL,

On SATURDAY, May 3rd, 1913,

By the Scholars of Kildwick Church School.

art 1.—A Children's Play, "A
Dream of Nursery Rhymes,"
[By L. Debenham. By permission of the
Publishers, Messrs. A. Heywood & Sons,]
Part II.—A Pastoral Cantata,
"May Day Revels," [by J. E. West],
[introducing Solos, Choruses and Dances.]
Accompanist - Mr. Bernard Longbottom.
Violinists - Miss Doris Gill, Mr. Wm. Feather

Admission - Sixpence.

[Proceeds for Railway Expenses of our Stepney Visitors.]

Gates open at 2 p.m.

Performance to commence at 2-30 p.m.

If the weather be unfavourable, the Entertainment will be postponed
until May 24th.

C. R. Snowden, Newsagent

It was reported in the May 10th issue of the Keighley News.

The entertainment was given in a field near Kildwick Hall, lent for the occasion by Messrs. W. A., J. J., and L. Brigg, and the first part consisted of a children's play "A Dream of Nursery Rhymes", [with] various characters dear to the hearts of children being represented, including Jack and Jill, Curlylocks [sic], Boy Blue, the Queen of Hearts, and the Knave of Hearts.

The second part consisted of a pastoral cantata "May Day Revels", in which solos, choruses and dances were introduced. The May Queen (Miss Annie Smith) attended in state to witness the revels, and it was a very pretty sight to see the children strewing flowers before her.

The children gave some excellent dances and much of their proficiency was due to the training by Miss Sugden. The costumes, for which Miss Spencer was responsible, were most artistic. The infant children had been trained by Miss Waite, and Mr. Appleby had trained the senior children. Mr. Longbottom was the pianist.

The proceeds will go towards defraying the railway expenses of children from Stepney, who are this week-end due to spend four days with their north-country friends at Kildwick.

The Craven Herald also carried a report on the pageant, in the edition dated May 9th 1913.

A concert was given on Saturday afternoon [May 3rd] by the school children of the Kildwick Day School. The object of the concert was to try and raise £4 to help defray part of the railway expenses of the party of school children who are coming from London on Whit Saturday, May 10th, to spend a few days in the village.

... the result exceeded the hopes of the promoters, as the performance had net proceeds of nearly £7. Part of the money will be sent to St. Thomas's School, Stepney, London ...

Children from Kildwick School and St. Thomas's School have been corresponding with each other for some time, and last year a party of scholars from Kildwick paid a visit to London where they were entertained by the Stepney scholars. This year it is the turn of the London children to spend a few days in the picturesque Airedale valley, and it is hoped that everybody will try to make their stay a pleasant and memorable one.

The following weekend, the visitors duly arrived. Their visit was reported in the Craven Herald of May 16th.

The suppressed eagerness and excitement of the scholars of Kildwick National School came to a head on Saturday afternoon last, when the train bearing the party of scholars and teachers from St. Thomas's School, Stepney, arrived on their long expected visit. Nearly all the children went to the station to meet the visitors, whilst the older and more sedate of the people took up their positions on the Church steps to welcome their children's friends.

The party were first taken to the school, where an excellent tea had been provided by the help of kind friends. After tea, all went for a walk on Farnhill Moor, which was enjoyed very much indeed, the sight of heather on its native heath being unknown to almost all of the party.

On the Sunday the party went to service at the Church, where their own vicar, the Rev. W. Muirhead, conducted the service. In the afternoon the party were conducted around the grounds of Kildwick Hall by Mr. J. J. Brigg, and shown all the many objects of interest collected there.

On Monday morning the whole party took the train to Skipton, where they were conducted round the Castle and the grounds, and other places of interest in that old market town. In the afternoon the scholars walked round with their friends and at night all returned to the Institute in Farnhill, where they, along with the scholars from Kildwick, gave a very excellent concert. The singing was very good indeed, as also was the acting. The room was crowded, and the receipts, which are to be devoted to the Institute Piano Fund, were very satisfactory.

Tuesday morning at ten o'clock was the time fixed for the departure of the visitors, and it was with lingering steps and heavy hearts they at last found their way to the station, each carrying some relic of their happy holiday in Airedale, and leaving behind them friends equally sad at their departure. The holiday was very much enjoyed by the whole of the party, no pains being spared to do everything to suit the visitors, and it will be a long time before this visit, which it is hoped will not be last one, will be forgotten both at Kildwick and amongst the scholars at Stepney.

Despite these hopes and good wishes, this would be the only visit the Stepney school made to Kildwick.

We have a photograph in our archive which are of the visitors from Stepney and their Kildwick hosts, taken in the grounds of Kildwick school.



The gentleman on the far right is the Kildwick headmaster, Thomas Appleby.

A report of the visit published in the West Yorkshire Pioneer mentions that at the concert given by the children:

The Kildwick boys were very anxious for little Miss Gladys Lloyd to sing the "Little Tin Gee Gee", the last time they heard it having been in London. The little girl then responded to their requests.

This tells us that Gladys Lloyd, who wrote the letter to Tom Rogers the previous December, must have been in the party that made the trip to Kildwick; and we think that she is in the photograph shown on the previous page.

Below is a blown-up extract from part of the second row; compare it with the photograph on page 3.



The girl in the centre (second from right in the group photograph above) is Gladys Lloyd.

The Stepney children certainly seemed to enjoy their visit. The edition of the Keighley News dated June 21st included the following report.

The teachers and children of St. Thomas's School, Stepney, who visited Kildwick last Whitsuntide, have presented to Kildwick Church School a photogravure entitled "Peace" after the painting by William Strutt. The picture, which is enclosed in a black frame with gilt slip represents the child Jesus standing, whilst grouped around Him are a lamb, lion, calf, wolf, and leopard. The following words are tastefully inscribed upon the frame: "Presented to Kildwick School in commemoration of a happy visit, by the teachers and scholars of St. Thomas's School, Stepney. Whitsun, 1913".



In September Rev. Muirhead, the vicar of St. Thomas's made a private visit to the area and called into the school to talk to the children. Perhaps this was to invite them to pay a further visit to Stepney ?

Kildwick school's second visit to St. Thomas's Stepney – 1914

Before 1914 became thoroughly unpleasant there was time, in early June, for the pupils of Kildwick school to pay another whistle-stop visit to London – as reported in the Keighley News, dated June 13th.

Twenty-two past and present scholars of the Kildwick National School and a number of adults, in charge of Mr. Thomas Appleby (headmaster) and Mr. James Mosley, left Kildwick by the 11pm on Friday week [June 5th], with the object of renewing friendship with the children and teachers of St. Thomas's School, Stepney, who visited Kildwick last year.

In spite of the late hour of departure quite a number of parents and friends went to the station to wish the travellers "bon voyage". From Keighley the party travelled by saloon to St. Pancras, and after breakfast visited Regent's Park, where the children spent a happy time in feeding the pigeons and squirrels. After a long look round at the Zoo the party went by special 'bus to Westminster Abbey, where they were met by the teachers of St. Thomas's School, Stepney.

Later they proceeded to Stepney by way of the Embankment and Mansion House, and on arrival were welcomed by the Rev. C. J. Beresford (warden of the Training College for Layworkers) who is at present in charge of the parish. Mr. Thomas Appleby acknowledged the welcome.

Luncheon having been served, the Tower of London was visited, and on the return to Stepney tea was served. At the table the Kildwick children sat with the friends with whom they had corresponded during the year, and invited them to visit Kildwick next year. After tea Dr. Barnardo's Homes were inspected, and the party again returned to the school, where the Stepney children entertained them with an excellent performance of a cantata entitled "St. Elizabeth's Roses". Games were also indulged in, and supper was served, and before departing the Kildwick children sang "Farewell, Stepney friends" ...

The return journey was made by underground railway to Kings Cross, the party leaving St. Pancras station on their journey to the North by the 11:40 train and arriving at Kildwick at about 6:30 on Sunday morning. The outing proved highly enjoyable.

Note: The first Dr. Barnardo's home was opened at 18 Stepney Causeway in 1870; a second home, at number 10, was opened in 1874. Both just a quarter of a mile from Arbour Square.

The following week, the paper reported that:

On Thursday 11th June, games and a picnic were organised on Farnhill Moor for those schoolchildren who were unable to go on the London trip.

In the school log for June 20th, Thomas Appleby wrote:

Six of the Class 1 children who were unable to visit London were today taken to Leeds. They visited the Museum, Town Hall, Assize Courts, Art Gallery, a large store, and Roundhay Park. The aviary and the Canal Gardens were much appreciated. Special notice was taken of the stuffed birds in the museum.

The subsequent history of St. Thomas's school

The invitation for the Stepney children to visit Kildwick in 1915 was not taken up, presumably on account of the war, and it appears that the relationship between the two schools was not resumed when the war ended.

Subsequently, St. Thomas's school was a victim in the 1939-45 conflict when, like a lot of the East-end of London, Arbour Square was bombed during the blitz. Following a raid in late 1940, the church was left in ruins and neither it nor the school ever re-opened. The buildings were demolished in 1955 and the site used for flats.

Appendix – A life-long friendship

After this piece was originally published, Enga Brown told us how her auntie, Dorothy Hill, had been involved in the exchange visits and, as a result, had formed a life-long friendship with one of the Stepney girls, Mabel Vaughan.

The following pages include Dorothy's own recollections of the exchange visits and a selection of family photographs.

Verbatim from Dorothy Hill born 1901, died 1982

One of the highlights of school life was our association with a girls' school in Stepney. Anyone who wished to write to a girl in this school gave in her name which was passed on to a pen friend. From then onwards we wrote letters and sent small presents to our special friend, and then waited eagerly for a return parcel. We sent and received small things which we made, fancy hankies, little mats, small drawings and paintings. It was all very pleasant and made a nice change in what, to me, was a very humdrum world of school.

The girl I wrote to first was called Kay Simons, and then I wrote to Annie Arkheart. I didn't meet either of these girls, but one I did meet, and we have remained in touch ever since.

This came about one Whitsuntide, when a party of the girls and teachers visited Kildwick. We were asked if any of us could take a girl to stay the weekend, and my mother said "Yes" so the girl who came to stay with us was called Mabel Vaughan. Her father was a policeman in the Metropolitan Police in London, and I thought that was quite something. We took them to various places of interest including Skipton Castle, where we had a photograph taken of us all together. It was a very unusual weekend and the visitors enjoyed it, some of them never having seen the country before. Then a little later, a party went to London from our school. I was ten years old at the time and to me it was a great event.

We came home from school on the Friday afternoon, with the idea of going to bed for an hour or two, as we were travelling by train through the night, but of course I was too excited to sleep and kept getting up to see what time it was. At last it was time to go to the station where we met all the others and we were off. We had teachers and a few friends who were to look after us and I remember we played all kinds of games through the night with no sign of sleep for any of us, and arrived in London at six thirty in the morning on Saturday.

We had breakfast at the station and then went from there to the zoo. What an exciting adventure, animals I had never seen before, but even then I couldn't bear to see them in cages.

We went to all the important places one visits in London; Westminster Abbey, the Tower, and Madame Tussauds, where I bought a doll in a kilt and a busby for my little sister, and a replica of the coronation chair for my mother.

Then we went to Stepney to meet our friends for tea. We were entertained by the teachers and girls at St. Thomas' Colet Girls' School and after tea they put on a wonderful concert of songs, sketches and dances. I still have the programme I received. Then back to the train and home for Sunday morning after having one of the busiest and most exciting days of my life.

When Mabel, my pen friend got married and went into her own home, my sister Mary and I went for a week's holiday and saw even more of London.

Mabel
Vaughan
m.
Bill French
25.4.28.



In the
garden
of
no. 79
aged
14?



Mabel
21.



love



Picnic on the moor.

Dorothy Hill. Ann Hill, Harry Hudspeth.
(mother)
Mary Hill, Mabel.



Mabel Bill Engel Mary
Peters Bar 1965 Brown



Mabel .? Harry, Doris, Dorothy
incap. Mosley

Mary. around 1920/1

Mabel came two week's holiday, followed at the weekend by Harry on his bike from London.

What next – can you help ?

Do you have any additional information on the visits to Stepney or by the Stepney children to Kildwick ? Do you have any of the letters or postcards that were sent ? If so, please email us at history@farnhill.co.uk.

Acknowledgements

The Farnhill and Kildwick Local History Group would like to thank the staff of Keighley and Skipton libraries for their help.

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Thanks are also due to Mrs. Helen Waller who contributed the postcard sent by Gladys Lloyd to her father to our archive, and to Kildwick School for permission to make a copy of the 1907-1922 Log Book.